

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
ABERDEEN DIVISION**

**MELISSA RUSHING on behalf of
the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

PLAINTIFF/RELATOR

VS.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 1:20CV210-SA-DAS

**CHRISTOPHER PAUL LICK;
GTR HOLDINGS, LLC;
GRASSROOTS A NATURAL COMPANY LLC;
ASPEN RIVER CANDLE COMPANY, LLC; AND
ASPEN LAKE ONLINE LLC**

DEFENDANTS

MOTION FOR STATUS CONFERENCE

COMES NOW, the Relator, Melissa Rushing, and submits this her Motion for Status Conference and in support thereof would show unto the Court as follows:


1. The Relator, Melissa Rushing, (hereinafter “Rushing”) filed the Qui Tam Complaint under seal which initiated this action on October 20, 2020. The Complaint [#3] made allegations that Defendants submitted false claims for loans to be guaranteed by the Small Business Administration pursuant to the Paycheck Protection Program §1102 (PPP) of the CARES Act. The Defendants falsely procured these funds of more than Six Million Dollars (\$6,000,000.00) and misappropriated the proceeds by intentionally and deliberately using same for purposes other than those designated by the PPP.
2. The filing of the Complaint by Rushing sparked civil and criminal investigations against the Defendant, Christopher Paul Lick (hereinafter “Lick”). As the result of the criminal charges against Lick, the government was able to seize substantial assets from Lick. In August of 2022, Lick pled guilty to one count of Wire Fraud and sentenced to seventy-

eight (78) months in the custody of the United States Bureau of Prisons for his participation in the scheme revealed in Rushing's Complaint.

3. Rushing and the United States entered into an Agreement whereby Rushing would receive fifteen percent (15%) of all monies collected as the result of Lick's illegal activity.
4. This Court entered an Order and Memorandum Opinion [#41] on January 16, 2024, which, in part, approved the Agreement between Rushing and the United States and awarded Rushing fifteen (15%) of the net proceeds of the forfeited assets. This award specifically includes a percentage of the proceeds realized from the sale of 982 South Ridge Road, Starkville, Mississippi and funds contained in an investment account which were part of the criminal forfeiture order.
5. Rushing received her portion of the funds from the investment account(s) on approximately May 19, 2024. To date, Rushing has not received a portion of the funds from the sale of the property located at 982 South Ridge Road, Starkville, Mississippi.
6. Upon information and belief, the property at 982 South Ridge Road, Starkville, Mississippi was not properly seized by the United States during any portion of the pendency of the civil litigation or the criminal investigation. This failure allowed a third party to acquire title to the property via tax sale on or about May 16, 2024. See attached Final Judgment to Quiet and Confirm Tax Sale and For Other Relief as Exhibit "A".
7. For these reasons and more, Rushing would ask that this Court hold a status conference to determine whether the United States did in fact properly seize the aforesaid property as anticipated in the Agreement and the Order and Memorandum Opinion [#41].

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Melissa Rushing would ask this Court schedule a status conference to determine matters related to the forfeiture of 982 South Ridge Road, Starkville, Mississippi. Relator, Melissa Rushing, asks for other more general relief to which she may be entitled.

Respectfully Submitted,

By: 

Connie M. Smith, Attorney for
Melissa Rushing

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this day I provided a copy of Motion for Determination of Relator's Share and Disbursement of Forfeiture via electronic means to:

J. Harland Webster, Esq.

Samuel Wright, Esq.

So certified, this the 29th day of July, 2024.



Connie M. Smith

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